

Natural Resources Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes
January 2009

Members Present:

Dennis Ferrell
Joe Pearson
Gene Abbott

Joyce O'Keefe
Claudia Emken
Richard Mark

Dale Stewart
Pat Kernan

IDNR Staff Present:

Tom Dilello
Greg Akers
Steve Gonzalez
Tim Schweizer
Tami Evans

Mick Rosendahl
Jan Nation
Mike Conlin
Leslie Sgro

Dave Sellman
Emily Chezem
Bill Richardson
Deborah Stone

Guests:

Peter Murphy, IAPD

Marc Miller, Lt. Governor's Office

Chairman Mark began the meeting at 1:00 p.m.; roll call was given and quorum was met.

Chairman Mark advised the board that Sharon Morelli has resigned.

The October 30, 2009 minutes and the January 13, 2009 agenda were adopted on a motion by Joe Pearson with Claudia Emken providing the second. Joyce O'Keefe asked for a report on budget. Chairman Mark suggested a budget discussion be added to the agenda under board comments; Gene Abbott provided a motion to add the topic with Dennis Ferrell providing the second.

OSLAD Grant Recommendations – Tom Dilello – Joyce O'Keefe provided the board with a report from the FY08 OSLAD Grant Hearings held October 9 & 10, 2009. Committee members include Joyce and Claudia Emken. Presentations were received from 71 applicants requesting \$25.7 million. Of the 71 applications, 11 were for land acquisition, 8 were combined applications and 52 were for development. The subcommittee recommends that projects 1-52, as ranked by staff, be funded as well as projects 57, 58, 62, 66 & 67. The subcommittee chose the latter projects because they were acquisition projects. The subcommittee also recommended that should additional funding become available, projects be funded in the following order: 56, 53, 54, 55, 59, 60, 61, 63, 64, 65, 68, 69, 70 and 71. Joyce O'Keefe provided the motion to accept the recommendations as noted above; Joe Pearson provided the second. No opposition was heard. Chairman Mark thanked both Claudia and Joyce for all their efforts in this process.

Joint Deer Task Force – Mike Conlin – The Joint Deer Task Force was created by House Resolution 65 to explore ways of managing the deer herd population, maintaining and increasing deer hunting opportunities, reducing vehicle accidents, reducing crop and property damage and maintaining and increasing the health of the Illinois deer herd. The JDTF consists of 15 members representing constituent groups, members of the General Assembly and state agencies, including DNR. A series of meetings, including six public meetings were held around the state to seek public comment; over 1,200 surveys were completed and returned.

Mike provided the board with an in-depth report of the task force and shared a copy of JDTF's seven final recommendations. Any changes can be achieved by administrative rule, not legislation. These recommendations are being reviewed by DNR wildlife staff to determine implementation and feasibility issues. A copy of the final JDTF recommendations is included in the minutes. The Board asked to be kept apprized of the JDTF issues.

This topic generated numerous questions from the board from the donation of venison to food pantries, the disposition of deer, the utilization of landowner permits, and increasing the harvest for the late winter season versus having a season in October.

Suggestions included allowing individuals the ability to receive additional permits if permits are still available after the cut off date, requiring trophy hunters to shoot a doe first, and to look into issuing "Governor" tags for outfitters. There was also mention of allowing crossbow hunting for youth under 16. Mike stated that the use of a crossbow is a highly debated issue and any changes would take legislation.

Status, Dam Safety – Gary Clark – As a follow up to a previous NRAB meeting, Gary provided the Board with an update on the Dam Safety Initiative. The Board was provided with a graphic that shows where the exclusion zones, signage and markers with appropriate verbiage are located on a dam. Public hearings on the dam safety initiative were held in September; most comments at the hearing were not in favor of the consultant's recommendations due to cost and impacts to recreational users. Joyce asked if a standardized rule for exclusion zones could not be changed to avoid impacts to exiting portages now in use by canoeists and kayakers. Following a discussion on the impacts of exclusion zones to current use, Joyce asked that DNR conference with some recreational users to discuss options to minimize the impacts of the rules on the use of existing portages. Joyce and Deborah will discuss in the near future.

Public Comments

Board Comments

Marc Miller, Senior Policy Advisor, Lt Governor's Office addressed the group and offered support and open lines of communication with the Lt. Governor and his office.

Leslie Sgro provided the Board with an update on budget issues. SB1132, amendment #3 has passed on is on its way to the Senate floor. Basically, this returns money back to some accounts swept in July. This is good news for the Department. DNR is also ready to sign the corrective action plan on the ongoing audit issues. FY09 has been challenging but is on track. Preliminary numbers are being put together for FY10.

Information on the Illinois Hall of Fame Banquet was provided. The ICF HOF banquet is February 28 in St. Charles.

A news release on Changes in Illinois Endangered & Threatened Species List Proposed was also given to the Board

Suggestions for the Wednesday, April 22 NRAB meeting include updates on the Joint Deer Task Force, budget issues and youth programs and what DNR is doing on that front. A presentation on the Cache River project was also suggested for a future meeting.

Adjourn - 3:00 p.m.